

## Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 USBERLIN 1371

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: WB, BWG, UR  
SUBJECT: STOBBE DINNER WITH AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV

REF: USBERLIN 1284

SUMMARY: GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE HAD DINNER WITH SOVIET  
AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE JUNE 2.  
SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL IN WEST BERLIN BYKOV ATTENDED THE DINNER  
BUT DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE  
HELD IN CONFIDENCE BETWEEN STOBBE AND ABRASIMOV AFTER DINNER.  
ABRASIMOV VOICED OPTIMISM THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SENAT  
AND GDR WOULD PROVE FRUITFUL IN SEVERAL AREAS, MOST NOTABLY  
THE HAMBURG AUTOBAHN. GOVERNING MAYOR AND ABRASIMOV DISCUSSED  
AT LENGTH DIFFERING WESTERN AND SOVIET VIEWPOINTS WITH RESPECT  
TO FEDERAL PRESENCE IN BERLIN AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF WEST  
BERLIN TO THE FRG. BERLIN SENAT OFFICIALS TOLD US THE ENTIRE  
EVENING WAS MARKED BY CORDIALITY. IN SENAT'S OPINION  
ONLY SURPRISING ASPECT OF DISCUSSIONS WAS ABRASIMOV'S  
OPTIMISTIC FORECAST ABOUT GDR-SENAT DISCUSSIONS. GOVERN-  
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ING MAYOR AND ALLIES MILDLY IRRITATED THAT SOVIETS  
CHOSE TO INCLUDE BYKOV IN DINNER BUT NONE OF THE ALLIES  
ARE PARTICULARLY UPSET BY IT SINCE, ACCORDING TO SENAT  
OFFICIALS, BYKOV SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED POLITICAL COMMENTS  
THE ENTIRE EVENING AND DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN STOBBE-  
ABRASIMOV TALK. PRESS COVERAGE, WHICH ERRONEOUSLY STATES  
THAT POSSIBLE TRIP BY STOBBE TO MOSCOW WAS DISCUSSED,

WAS MODEST. END SUMMARY

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, GOVERNING MAYOR DIETRICH STOBBE, ACCOMPANIED BY SENAT CHANCELLERY DIRECTOR HEIMANN AND THEIR WIVES, AND FOREIGN OFFICE INTERPRETOR HARTMANN, HAD DINNER WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV JUNE 2 AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN EAST BERLIN. ALSO ATTENDING ON SOVIET SIDE WERE MRS. ABRASIMOVA, MINISTER COUNSELLOR KHOTULEV AND WIFE, CONSUL GENERAL BYKOV FROM WEST BERLIN AND SOVIET EMBASSY BERLIN SPECIALIST VIKTOR TYUTYUNOV WHO SERVED AS INTERPRETOR. HEIMANN TOLD ALLIED SENAT LIAISON OFFICERS THAT INCLUSION OF BYKOV HAD BECOME KNOWN TO GOVERNING MAYOR JUST BEFORE NOON JUNE 2. STOBBE DECIDED HE COULD NOT REFUSE TO ATTEND DINNER AT THAT LATE DATE, BUT DETERMINED IN ADVANCE THAT HE WOULD AVOID POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS IN BYKOV'S PRESENCE. AS A CONSEQUENCE, IT WAS AGREED AT THE OUTSET OF THE DINNER THAT ALL POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE (UNTER VIER AUGEN) BETWEEN ABRASIMOV AND STOBBE AFTER DINNER WITH BYKOV JOINING KHOTULEV, HEIMANN AND THE LADIES FOR GENERAL CONVERSATION IN A SEPARATE ROOM. HEIMANN REPORTED THAT THROUGHOUT THE EVENING, BYKOV WENT TO GREAT PAINS TO AVOID SAYING ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS HAVING A POLITICAL CHARACTER.

2. AT THE OUTSET OF THEIR AFTER DINNER CONVERSATION,  
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STOBBE ASKED ABRASIMOV FOR HIS APPRAISAL OF THE CURRENT STATE OF FRG-GDR NEGOTIATIONS AND HIS ADVICE HOW THESE MIGHT BE FURTHERED ALONG. ABRASIMOV RESPONDED THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF SOVIET GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV TO BONN HAD BEEN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN IMPROVING EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND THAT THE GENERAL SECRETARY HAD EMPHASIZED DURING HIS VISIT THAT BERLIN SHOULD NOT BECOME A HINDRANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DETENTE. ABRASIMOV VOLUNTEERED THAT HE BELIEVED THE SENAT AND GDR WOULD BE ABLE TO FIND FORMULA FOR WORKING OUT THEIR PROBLEMS; HE WAS VERY OPTIMISTIC THAT CERTAIN ISSUES, MOST PARTICULARLY THE HAMBURG AUTOBAHN, COULD BE RESOLVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ABRASIMOV EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT IN MAKING THIS REMARK, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS FOR THE GOVERNING MAYOR'S EARS ONLY AND WOULD NOT FIND ITS WAY INTO THE PRESS. THE GOVERNING MAYOR RESPONDED THAT

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HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE GDR WAS NOT REALLY INTERESTED  
IN FURTHERING NEGOTIATIONS. THE GOVERNING MAYOR BELIEVED  
IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF DETENTE, HOWEVER, THAT PRACTICAL  
MATTERS CONTINUE TO BE RESOLVED AT A CERTAIN MARKED PACE  
SO THAT ONE CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE SITUATION IN BERLIN  
AND IN GERMANY CONTINUES TO BE NORMALIZED.

3. IN RESPONSE, ABRASIMOV NOTED THE SUCCESS OF THE  
DETENTE POLICIES IN BERLIN WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE LARGE  
NUMBER OF VISITORS AND TRANSIT TRAVELLERS TO AND THROUGH  
THE GDR AND ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER THE QA NEEDS MORE  
FORWARD MOTION. (VORWAERTSBEWEGUNG). IN ANY CASE ABRASIMOV  
ADDED, PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE HAMBURG AUTOBAHN AND TELTOW  
CANAL COULD BE RESOLVED IF THERE IS GOODWILL ON BOTH SIDES.  
THESE CANNOT BE RESOLVED, HOWEVER, WHEN GROSS VIOLATIONS  
OF THE QA AND UNCALLED FOR DEMONSTRATIONS OF FEDERAL  
PRESENCE CONTINUE TO OCCUR. IN THIS LATTER REGARD, ABRASIMOV  
POINTED PARTICULARLY TO THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES TO  
COMMEMORATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 17TH OF JUNE TO  
WHICH FEDERAL OFFICIALS

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HAVE BEEN INVITED FROM BONN.

4. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSIONS OF THEIR DIFFERENT  
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE QA, STOBBE ASKED ABRASIMOV IF  
THERE REALLY WAS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ON BOTH SIDES

AS TO THE ROLE OF THE FRG IN THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN. CERTAINLY, STOBBE SAID, AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THE SOVIET UNION HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT FEDERAL OFFICES WOULD DISAPPEAR FROM WEST BERLIN. THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, OF COURSE, WERE QUITE DIFFERENT. STOBBE ASKED IF THE SOVIET UNION ONLY TOLERATES THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF FEDERAL OFFICES OR WHETHER THEY WERE NOW PREPARED OPENLY TO ACCEPT THEM. LIKEWISE, STOBBE SAID, ALTHOUGH THE BUNDESTAG AND BUNDESVERSAMMLUNG WERE NOT PERMITTED TO COME TO BERLIN, PARTY CAUCUSES AND BUNDESTAG COMMITTEES WERE. NONETHELESS, THE SOVIETS CONTINUED TO PROTEST THEIR PRESENCE IN BERLIN. IN RESPONSE, ABRASIMOV SAID THE QA CLEARLY RECOGNIZES THE STATUS QUO WITH RESPECT TO EXISTING FEDERAL OFFICES. HOWEVER, THE SOVIET UNION HAS SAID THAT NO NEW OFFICES MAY BE ESTABLISHED. WITH RESPECT TO THE MEETING OF CAUCUSES AND COMMITTEES, THE SOVIET UNION HAS NEVER PROTESTED INDIVIDUAL BUNDESTAG CAUCUS OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS. HOWEVER, WHEN TWO CAUCUSES OR 3 TO 5 COMMITTEES COME SIMULTANEOUSLY, THEN THE SOVIETS MUST PROTEST AS THESE ORGANIZATIONS ACCOUNT FOR HALF OF THE BUNDESTAG.

5. STOBBE ASKED WHAT COULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE AROUND BERLIN. HE ASKED WHY THE SOVIET UNION APPEARED OPPOSED TO A SENSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST BERLIN'S TIES (BINDUNGEN) WITH THE FRG. ABRASIMOV ANSWERED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NEVER AND WOULD NEVER OBJECT TO A SENSIBLE FEDERAL PRESENCE IN BERLIN. THE

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SAME WAS TRUE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TIES (VERBINDUNGEN). HE RE-EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS COULD NOT ACCEPT THE CONTENTION THAT BERLIN (WEST) WAS PART (TEIL) OR A LAND OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.

6. STOBBE TOLD ABRASIMOV THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE SOVIET UNION THAT WEST BERLIN NOT POSE A THREAT TO THE GDR. HE WISHED TO ASSURE ABRASIMOV THAT IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE CITY HE DID NOT SEEK TO BE PROVOCATIVE WITH HIS WORK. HE BELIEVED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE SOVIETS' CONCERN THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE FRG IN BERLIN COULD REPRESENT THE FIRST STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF RE-ESTABLISHING BERLIN AS THE CAPITAL OF A GERMANY THAT DID NOT CONSIST OF TWO STATES. STOBBE SOUGHT TO ASSURE ABRASIMOV THAT THIS WAS NOT THE GOAL TOWARDS WHICH ONE WAS WORKING WHEN THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR OR FEDERAL PRESIDENT VISITED BERLIN OR WHEN COMMITTEES OF THE BUNDESTAG MET HERE. STOBBE THEN ASKED IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE SOVIETS TO RETHINK THEIR STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO BERLIN. IN RESPONSE TO ABRASIMOV'S

QUESTION "IN WHICH DIRECTION," STOBBE RESPONDED THAT THE FACTUAL SITUATION IN EUROPE IS THAT THERE ARE TWO GERMAN STATES, NOT THREE. THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN ARE NOT A CONSTITUENT PART OF THE FRG. NONETHELESS, WEST BERLINERS WANT TO BELONG TO THE WEST; THEREFORE THEY NEED MORE THAN JUST SYMBOLIC LINKS (VERBINDUNGEN)

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WITH THE FRG. STOBBE ARGUED THAT WERE THE SOVIET UNION NOT TO PROTEST SO OFTEN, THIS WOULD LEAD VERY QUICKLY AND SURELY TO THE FEELING THAT THE SITUATION IS AS IT APPEARS TO BE, I.E., THAT THERE ARE TWO GERMAN STATES. STOBBE SAID IT STRUCK HIM THAT PRESENT SOVIET POLICIES AND INTERESTS WOULD BE FURTHERED IF THE SOVIETS KEPT THEIR VOICES LOWER, BECAUSE EVERY PUBLIC SOVIET COMMENT ON THE BERLIN SITUATION CALLS FOR A NEGATIVE REACTION. THE GDR TOO, MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE SITUATION (IN BERLIN) IS SUCH THAT THE POSITION OF THE THREE ALLIED POWERS AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN TO THE FRG MUST BE ACCEPTED.

7. ABRASIMOV DID NOT RESPOND TO THE GOVERNING MAYOR'S BROADER PROPOSAL THAT THE SOVIETS ACCEPT THE DE FACTO RELATIONSHIP WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE FRG AND WEST BERLIN. HE DID NOTE THAT THE SOVIET UNION RECOGNIZES TWO GERMAN STATES PLUS A SPECIAL AREA - WEST BERLIN. IN RESPONSE TO STOBBE'S SUGGESTION THAT THE SOVIETS REFRAIN FROM

PROTESTING FOR ONE YEAR SO THAT ONE MIGHT SEE HOW THE SITUATION

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WOULD DEVELOP ABRASIMOV SAID THAT IF THE WEST COULD AVOID VIOLATING THE QA FOR ONE YEAR, THEN THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD KEEP QUIET FOR THREE. ABRASIMOV CONCLUDED THE AFTER-DINNER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PONTIFICAL BLESSING "LIVE IN PEACE AND DEVELOP, (LEBT FRIEDLICH UND ENTWICKELT EUCH) THAT IS GUARANTEED BY THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENT."

8. WEST BERLIN PRESS GAVE MODEST COVERAGE TO MEETING, WITH SEVERAL PAPERS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTING THAT THE SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE STOBBE TRIP TO MOSCOW HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. SENAT OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT NOT ONE WORD ABOUT THIS SUBJECT WAS SPOKEN DURING THE ENTIRE EVENING. THERE WAS ONE LENGTHY BYLINED ARTICLE ON THE MEETING BY FRIEDHELM KEMNA OF "DIE WELT". KEMNA, WELL BRIEFED (BY SOMEONE WHO KNEW THE DETAILS OF THE EVENING) REPORTED THAT THE MEETING BETWEEN STOBBE AND ABRASIMOV HAS WELL ESTABLISHED PRECEDENTS (BRANDT MET THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR FOUR TIMES, SCHUETZ FIVE). KEMNA WRITES THAT THE ALLIES GENERALLY AGREE THAT SUCH MEETINGS ARE BENEFICIAL, BUT THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS RESERVATIONS ON ONE POINT OR ANOTHER. THE "HASTE" WITH WHICH THIS LAST MEETING WAS ARRANGED, AND THE PRESENCE OF BYKOV, ACCORDING TO KEMNA, TROUBLED THE ALLIES ON THIS OCCASION.

9. COMMENT: WE AND THE BRITISH AND FRENCH WERE ALL SLIGHTLY DISTURBED THAT WE RECEIVED SO LITTLE ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE PLANNED ABRASIMOV-STOBBE MEETING AND THAT WE LEARNED ONLY AFTER THE FACT THAT BYKOV HAD PARTICIPATED. WE HAD ANTICIPATED THE FRENCH WOULD BE VERY UPSET THE WAY THINGS DEVELOPED, BUT SURPRISINGLY THEY HAVE TAKEN THINGS FAIRLY CALMLY. WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR UNHAPPINESS THAT BYKOV WAS AT THE DINNER, BUT NO APPARENT HARM WAS DONE AND WE BELIEVE NOTHING

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MORE NEED BE SAID ABOUT IT. WE THINK IT USEFUL THAT STOBBE USES THESE OCCASIONS TO EXPLORE SOVIET THINKING ON THE QA. HE SOMETIMES ASKS QUESTIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK BUT FEEL CONSTRAINED NOT TO. OF COURSE, IT COULD BE DANGEROUS TO HAVE THE GOVERNING MAYOR ENGAGING IN THESE DISCUSSIONS AND WERE A LESS EXPERIENCED MAN IN THE POSITION, WE MIGHT NOT FEEL THE WAY WE DO. WE ARE SATISFIED, HOWEVER, THAT STOBBE IS HANDLING HIMSELF

WELL AND DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD OBJECT TO FURTHER CONTACTS OF THIS SORT PROVIDED THEY OCCUR RELATIVELY INFREQUENTLY I.E., NO MORE THAN TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR. HEIMANN TOLD US INCIDENTALLY, THAT BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT ANOTHER GET TOGETHER PERHAPS SIMETIME IN FALL WOULD BE MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS. NO DEFINITE DATES WERE SET, HOWEVER.

10. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT ON SENAT PROTOCOL RECORD, NOR WERE SLO'S ADVISED ORALLY, STOBBE TOLD MINISTER AND POLAD ON JUNE 6 THAT ABRASIMOV HAD CONCLUDED MEETING WITH CURIOUS SUGGESTION THAT THE TWO OF THEM RETURN TO SAME MODE OF MEETINGS AS PREVAILED EARLIER BETWEEN HIM AND SCHUETZ. IT IS NOT TOO CLEAR WHAT WAS MEANT BY THIS. EARLIER MEETINGS WERE RARELY PUBLICIZED, AND WERE OFTEN, IF NOT ALWAYS, ARRANGED BY GERMAN BUSINESSMAN WOLFGANG BOETTGER, HONORARY CONSUL FOR HAITI. MEETINGS WERE SOMETIMES LUNCHEES, AND SOMETIMES AT BOETTGER'S COCKTAIL PARTIES. STOBBE SAID HE DID NOT LIKE THIS IDEA, WE AGREED, COMMENTING THAT EARLIER MEETINGS HAD GIVEN APPEARANCE OF FURTIVENESS. GEORGE

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